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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 COLOMBO 001216

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SA, SA/INS; NSC FOR E. MILLARD

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07-22-14

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [CE](#) [LTTE](#)

SUBJECT: TNA MPS REQUEST USG SOFTEN STANCE ON LTTE;  
CLAIM ALLEGIANCE TO TIGERS

Refs: Colombo 1190 and previous

(U) Classified by Ambassador Jeffrey J. Lunstead.  
Reasons 1.5 (b,d).

1. (C) SUMMARY: In a July 16 meeting with poloff, TNA MPs had a litany of familiar requests for the USG: lift the ban on the LTTE, stop USG military assistance to the GSL, promote the ISGA as the basis for peace talks, stop making statements against the LTTE, and pressure the GSL to stop helping Karuna. Most of the requests were not new, but did seem more focused than usual. The TNA MPs claimed direct ties to the LTTE, the first time the TNA has done so to a USG official. TNA comments about US activities and statements reveal they are listening to what we say. The TNA certainly has close links to the Tigers but they are not part of the LTTE. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) On July 16, poloff visited Jaffna (reported septel) and met with seven of the nine Jaffna Tamil National Alliance (TNA) MPs, (Mr. Mavai Senathirajah, Mr. N. Raviraj, Mr. K. Sivanesan, Mr. K. Sivajilingam, Mr. S. Kajendran, Ms. Pathmini Sithamparanathan, and Mr. Elaventhen).

Lift the Ban  
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3. (C) Kajendran (a former student leader from Jaffna University and Prabhakaran's rumored future son-in-law) began the discussion by emphasizing the humanitarian crisis faced by Jaffna's IDPs, but quickly suggested that if the USG wants to help with the peace process, it needs to talk to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Poloff pointed out that the LTTE's status as an FTO prevented the USG from talking to the Tigers. To this, Sivajilingam exclaimed, "The TNA is under the leadership of the LTTE organization, of our supreme leader Mr. Prabhakaran!" Several other MPs loudly agreed with him. (Note: This was the first time Mission has heard the TNA clearly claim direct ties to the LTTE, at least to a USG official. End Note.) Sithamparanathan, an MP supposedly hand-picked by the LTTE to run in April's election, added that the USG has a "misconception" of the LTTE and asserted that the LTTE are not terrorists. She added that the Tamil people are disappointed the USG has banned the LTTE and that if the USG lifted the ban, it would give the LTTE equal footing. Sivanesan added that other nations (India, UK, Canada) would follow the example of the USG and lift their bans as well.

4. (C) The MPs also discussed the "legitimacy" of the LTTE. Sivanesan made the point that the April 2 parliamentary election (which yielded 22 TNA MPs) gave a mandate from the Tamil people to LTTE leader Prabhakaran. Sithamparanathan suggested that the Tamil freedom struggle is legitimate and the USG should pressure the GSL to grant self-determination to the Tamil people. No other organization has the courage to represent the Tamils and the MPs would like the USG to recognize this. The Tamils and Sinhalese, she explained, represent two separate nations. The Tamils are "no longer minorities" and they have their own nation. As such, when these two nations are having problems, the USG should treat the LTTE and GSL as equals.

Stop USG Military Assistance to GSL  
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5. (C) Another popular theme the MPs focused on was the USG grant of a Coast Guard cutter to the GSL under the Excess Defense Articles Program. Sivanesan claimed that the USG has disturbed the balance of power in Sri Lanka by giving the GSL the warship. By encouraging the GSL to strengthen its military, the USG is against the Tamil nation. The Tamil people were disappointed the USG has chosen to strengthen the GSL. Pro-LTTE website

TamilNet's July 16 coverage of the meeting with poloff headlined, "US military assistance weakening peace process - TNA."

16. (C) Eelaventhen, the sole TNA national list appointee, demanded that when the USG gives money for rehabilitation of the North and East, it should funnel this money to the LTTE. Poloff noted that the LTTE's FTO status made this impossible. Eelaventhen conceded that the money should be given to NGOs - but under no circumstances should the USG give money directly to the GSL for rehabilitation in the North and East.

#### Promote ISGA as the Basis for Peace Talks

17. (C) Former Jaffna mayor Raviraj, who acted as translator for most of his fellow MPs, noted the importance of the Interim Self Governing Authority (ISGA) as the basis for peace talks. He explained that because the Sub-Committee for Immediate Rehabilitation and Humanitarian Needs (SIHERN) and the North East Rehabilitation Fund (NERF) failed to work, the ISGA is now needed. The USG should pressure the GSL to start peace talks based on the LTTE's request for an ISGA.

#### Stop Making Statements Against the LTTE

18. (C) Raviraj also stressed that the international community, especially the USG, needs to be neutral about human rights. He was not happy with recent USG statements against the LTTE (referring to Mission's July 9 press statement condemning the July 7 suicide bombing in Colombo and calling on the GSL and LTTE to take steps to halt violence in the east). Raviraj complained that the USG did not make statements when LTTE cadre are killed in the east and that the MPs would like the USG to stop making statements against the LTTE.

#### Pressure GSL to Stop Helping Karuna

19. (C) Finally, Raviraj raised the issue of breakaway eastern LTTE leader Karuna. He stated that the GSL is engaged in destroying the Tamil nation through Karuna and that the USG should "exert pressure" on the GSL to stop Sri Lankan Military Intelligence from its involvement with Karuna.

10. (C) At various points in the conversation, poloff reiterated the USG stance that the LTTE must renounce terror in word and deed in order to be de-listed, including ceasing assassinations and child recruitment, among other activities. Where appropriate, poloff noted that the LTTE's FTO status prohibited assistance to the Tigers, but did give an overview of USG assistance in to people in the North and East and cited examples of DoD (BRAVA humanitarian medical mission), DoS (demining), and USAID programming.

#### Comment

11. (C) Heated rhetoric aside, the TNA has close links to the Tigers, but they are not the LTTE. Most of the MPs' requests were not new, but did seem more focused (and intransigent) than usual. Their resentment of the USG FTO designation of the LTTE indicates the degree to which they crave acceptance from the international community. Our public statements are intended to give the message to the LTTE that they will not gain international recognition until they change their ways, and our military cooperation is intended to send the message that a stronger Sri Lankan military makes a return to war less of an option. Based on the heated reaction from these MPs, the LTTE has heard the messages.

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